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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4505  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE 0071  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE 0237  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0296  
RHHMUNA/CDRUSPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 001362

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/MTS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 6/29/2019  
TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [RP](#) [SY](#) [UNDOF](#)  
SUBJECT: PHILIPPINE TROOPS TO JOIN UNITED NATIONS  
PEACEKEEPERS IN GOLAN HEIGHTS

Classified By: Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: The Philippine government has announced that a battalion of 340 Philippine military and law enforcement personnel is expected to join United Nations peacekeepers in the Golan Heights soon. The dispatch of this battalion, which will serve with the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) for at least six months, represents the largest overseas deployment of Philippine troops in eight years. The Philippines is currently the 30th-largest contributor of UN peacekeepers, and the Arroyo administration has repeatedly emphasized its continued commitment to serving in United Nations peacekeeping operations, notwithstanding the demands placed on military and law enforcement resources by offensive operations against insurgent groups and terrorists in the Philippines. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) Philippine Ambassador to the UN Hilario Davide, Jr. and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) announced June 23 that a battalion of 340 Philippine troops will be dispatched in September to join the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force in the disputed Golan Heights region on the border of Syria and Israel. This deployment, the largest overseas movement of Philippine troops since 600 troops were sent to East Timor in 2001 in support of the United Nations Transitional Administration, will comprise both military and law enforcement personnel who will serve for a minimum of six months. The Filipinos will replace a Polish battalion, joining more than 1,000 peacekeepers from Austria, Canada, Croatia, Japan, India, and Poland presently assigned to the Golan Heights. Commenting on the impending deployment, Ambassador Davide noted, "In our own little way, we will help keep the peace in that part of the Middle East."

¶3. (U) Philippine military and law enforcement personnel have served in various United Nations peacekeeping missions for more than 45 years, and have an excellent reputation as peacekeepers and observers. The Philippines is currently the 30th largest contributor of UN peacekeepers, with some 613 military and law enforcement personnel now serving in United Nations missions in Afghanistan, Cote d'Ivoire, East Timor, Georgia, Haiti, Liberia, and Sudan. AFP spokesperson Lt. Col. Romeo Brawner recently asserted that the United Nations prefers to have Philippine personnel supporting their most difficult and challenging peacekeeping operations.

¶4. (C) Since the Philippines' initial participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations in 1963, 16 Filipino peacekeepers have lost their lives in the line of duty. Valuing its reputation for professionalism and discipline as peacekeepers, the Philippine government has repeatedly emphasized its continued commitment to the support of United

Nations peacekeeping operations. However, the Arroyo administration's troop-intensive offensive against communist New People's Army rebels, rogue Muslim insurgent elements, and Abu Sayyaf Group terrorists has placed heavy demands on both military and law enforcement personnel, forcing the government to make increasingly difficult resource decisions in order to maintain its long-standing commitment to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

KENNEY